**REMARKS**:

In the Office Action dated December 11, 2007, claims 1, 3-9, 11-16, 20, 32-36 and 38-41, in the above-identified U.S. patent application were rejected. Reconsideration of the rejections is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1, 3-9, 11-16, 20, 32-36 and 38-41 remain in this application, claims 2, 10, 17-19, 21 and 37 have been canceled, and claims 22-31 have been withdrawn.

Claim 40 was rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, due to the language "pharmaceutical composition". Claim 40 has been amended to delete the term "pharmaceutical" so that claim 40 corresponds with claim 20. In view of this amendment, applicants request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 40 was rejected under 35 USC §112, first paragraph, due to the language "pharmaceutical composition". As discussed above, the term "pharmaceutical" has been deleted from claim 40 so that claim 40 corresponds with claim 20. In view of this amendment, applicants request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 3-9, 11-16, 20, 32-36, 38-39 and 41 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over Tijsterman in view of Elbashir and McSwiggen. As pointed out in the office action, Tijsterman does not suggest or disclose a method for inhibiting the expression of a target transcript in vitro in mammalian cells as recited in the present claims. Tijsterman discloses post transcriptional gene silencing in *C. elegans* using dsRNA and asRNA. Applicants point out that in *Drosophila* and mammalian cells, RISC activity in RNA silencing has been established, including the ability to bypass the upstream part of RNAi by direct administration of siRNAs in vivo and in vitro.

However, in *C. elegans*, evidence for RISC activity has not been found and thus the mechanism of action is believed to be different between *C. elegans* and mammals. In addition, Tijsterman indicates that asRNAs failed to trigger gene silencing in mut-7 and mut-14 animals. In view of this, one skilled in the art would not interpret Tijsterman as suggesting that a single stranded RNA molecule can inhibit the expression of a target transcript in vitro in any and all organisms.. Elbashir does not cure this deficiency because Elbashir used duplexes of 21-nucleotide RNAs to mediate RNA interference in cultured mammalian cells not single stranded RNA. McSwiggen was cited for the disclosure of chemical modifications for increased stability. McSwiggen does not suggest or disclose that single stranded RNA can be used to mediate RNA interference in mammalian cells. Applicants respectfully contend that one skilled in the art would have known that *C. elegans* and mammals have different mechanisms by which RNAi is initiated and would not have expected RNA molecules which work in *C. elegans* to be predictive of results in mammals, particularly in view of the fact that Tijsterman indicates that certain *C. elegans* genes (*mut-7 and mut-14*) were required for the single stranded RNA to trigger gene silencing. Thus, one skilled in the art would not combine a reference which uses *C. elegans* (Tijsterman) with a reference which uses mammalian cells (Elbashir) to arrive at the present invention. McSwiggen does not cure the deficiencies in Tijsterman and Elbashir as McSwiggen does not suggest that single stranded RNA molecules can be used to inhibit the expression of a target transcript in mammalian cells either. In view of the above discussion, applicants request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of claims 1, 3-9, 11-16, 20, 32-36, and 38-41 are now in condition for allowance. If it is believed that the application is not in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the undersigned attorney be contacted at the telephone number below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fee for such an extension together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account No. 02-2135.

Respectfully submitted,

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